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# CURRENT LITERATURE.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

### Botany of the Faeroes.

THESE INTERESTING ISLANDS have been the subject of a thorough investigation by Danish botanists, whose results are being published in English.<sup>1</sup> In part I Warming gives a brief account of previous botanical work in the islands, after which C. H. Ostenfeld sets forth the geography, topography, industrial conditions, geology, and climate. The latter author lists and discusses the phanerogams and pteridophytes of the islands, and presents an interesting phytogeographic summary. He finds, as have others in northern lands, that several species, more at home in temperate climes, do not bear fruit. There are no endemic species, and the flora is strikingly like that of Scandinavia and Britain. Of 277 species of vascular plants, 70 are Arctic, 164 Temperate European, and 43 Atlantic. Ostenfeld regards the flora as postglacial, and he thinks that the Faeroes have been joined to the continent since the ice age. The plants are not notably adapted for wind or bird dispersal; furthermore, few migratory birds pass over these islands; and those which come migrate on empty stomachs. The ocean currents have the wrong direction to be of any avail. Finally, there is good direct evidence of higher land in recent times. C. Jensen treats the bryophytes in a similar manner, and F. Børgesen takes up the freshwater algae. The latter author takes issue with Ostenfeld, and inclines to think that winds and migrating birds have brought most of the freshwater algae to the islands. Jan Mayen has similar facts to be accounted for, but there a postglacial land bridge is out of the question. E. Östrup treats the freshwater diatoms, E. Rostrup the fungi, and Deichmann Branth the lichens.

Most of part II is taken up by Børgesen's excellent treatment of the marine algae. He lists and discusses critically 83 reds, 73 browns, 46 greens, and 14 blue-greens. Östrup considers the marine diatoms, and Ostenfeld the marine phytoplankton. The latter author discusses the seasonal changes of the plankton, which he finds to be prevaillingly oceanic and not arctic in relationship. The phytoplankton of freshwater lakes is presented by Børgesen and Ostenfeld, and Dahlstedt gives a critical account of the Hieracia. At the close of the second part Warming considers the question over which Børgesen and Ostenfeld disagreed in the first part, and

<sup>1</sup> BOTANY of the Faeroes based upon Danish investigations. Part I, 8vo. pp. 338. *pls.* 10. *figs.* 50. 1901. Part II. pp. 343. *pls.* 2. *figs.* 100. 1903. Copenhagen: Det Nordiske Forlag; London: John Wheldon & Co.

he is inclined to side with Börgesen. The Faeroes certainly have a flora of recent origin, thus contrasting with the Azores and Canaries, where endemism is to be found. While Warming accepts Ostenfeld's strictures in the matter of seed dispersal by birds and ocean currents, he thinks that wind is an adequate transporting factor. The fauna and geological considerations seem to unite against the land-bridge theory. Warming says that he is more inclined now than ever before to believe in the efficiency of wind as an agent for scattering seeds over great distances. A third and final part of this valuable work is promised for the near future.—H. C. COWLES.

### Two text-books on agriculture.

AGRICULTURE FOR BEGINNERS, by Burkett, Stevens, and Hill<sup>2</sup> forms a small but very attractive volume, designed as a text-book in agriculture for the public schools. The subject-matter of the book is divided into nine chapters, each dealing with a subdivision of agriculture or related sciences, as: soil, diseases of plants, domestic animals, etc. If, as the authors believe, "agriculture is an eminently teachable subject" and should be taught in public schools, this book forms an excellent introduction to the subject. It is written in clear style and is remarkably free from errors which usually find their way into works dealing with such heterogeneous subjects as the so-called science of agriculture. Moreover, the excellent typography and numerous artistic illustrations make the little book unusually attractive. In a few cases it would seem that subjects are not treated in just proportion to their relative importance. Thus, the discussion of drainage of the soil is limited almost to bare statements of the effects of draining, without sufficient explanation to make them clear. On the other hand, two whole chapters are devoted to descriptions of specific fungous diseases and insect enemies, although these are hardly germane to the subject. The authors inform us that the chapter on dairying, in which accidentally were included several miscellaneous sections, has been properly rearranged in later impressions.

The other volume, entitled *Agriculture for the common schools*,<sup>3</sup> comes from the pen of James B. Hunnicutt. While this book contains an abundance of wholesome ethical advice and perhaps some good practical hints for the farmer, its absolute lack of scientific accuracy should preclude its use in the schoolroom. Aside from the general ignorance of natural phenomena displayed throughout the book, such flagrant errors as the following are common: "Each of these [roots] carries a little soft point called spongiole on the tip, and through this constantly absorbs or drinks in the water from the earth." "Some of these elements, such as carbon dioxid and hydrogen, were

<sup>2</sup> BURKETT, C. W., STEVENS, F. L., and HILL, D. H., *Agriculture for beginners*. pp. i + 267. *figs.* 215. Boston: Ginn & Co. 1903. \$0.85.

<sup>3</sup> HUNNICUTT, J. B., *Agriculture for the common schools*. pp. viii + 225. Atlanta: The Cultivator Publishing Co. 1903.